

On behalf of the 26th Congressional District, I offer my sincere congratulations to the Lake Dallas High School Fighting Falcons on their 50 years of teamwork, success and greatness. I wish them a bright future.

RECOGNIZING MILLER'S HEALTH SYSTEMS 50 YEARS IN BUSINESS

HON. JACKIE WALORSKI

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2014

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate a local small business for 50 years of great service to Hoosiers all over Indiana. Miller's Health Systems is known throughout the state of Indiana for providing excellent services in: assisted living, rehabilitation, and nursing home care.

The business started by Wallace and Connie Miller in 1964 as Miller's Merry Manor nursing home on the outskirts of Warsaw. After the company was taken over by their son V. Richard Miller, the company has expanded to over 30 Miller's Merry Manors and 10 senior living facilities. With the multitude of facilities Miller's Health Systems has today, they have grown to over 3,000 employees. Their mission statement speaks to the importance of the Miller's Health Systems employees enjoying the work they do and helping them grow. The company has helped this happen by having Miller's Merry Manor 100 percent employee-owned. The Miller's commitment to service and their core principles of passion, integrity, stewardship, growth, and adaptation have helped Miller's Health Systems withstand the test of time.

As the Representative for the many employees and facilities for Miller's Health Systems it is with great honor I recognize the 50th anniversary of this great business. With the leadership of the Miller family and the passion of their employees, I have no doubt there will be many more celebrations to come. On behalf of Indiana's Second District, I am proud to recognize the last 50 years of Miller's Health Systems and wish them many more.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SCOTT DesJARLAIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2014

Mr. DesJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, on July 30, 2014, I was unable to cast a vote on rollcall No. 468 due to a personal health matter.

Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of rollcall No. 468, H. Res. 676, to provide for the authority to initiate litigation for actions by the President or other executive branch officials inconsistent with their duties under the Constitution of the United States.

21ST CENTURY ENDANGERED SPECIES TRANSPARENCY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 29, 2014

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4315) to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require publication on the Internet of the basis for determinations that species are endangered species or threatened species, and for other purposes:

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Chair, I oppose H.R. 4315, the so-called "Endangered Species Transparency and Reasonableness Act," which is an overt assault on the Endangered Species Act designed to weaken its protections and guarantee the likelihood of extinction for wildlife, plants, and fish.

The Endangered Species Act is one of the Nation's most important environmental laws. Signed into law by President Richard Nixon over forty years ago, the Endangered Species Act continues to serve as an effective tool for protecting our wildlife, plants, and fish from the brink of extinction.

To ensure enforcement of the Endangered Species Act, Congress empowered citizens to bring enforcement actions to hold parties accountable for violating the law or to compel the government to protect endangered species. Importantly, the law does not provide for rewards of damages for the citizen bringing the suit. Rather, the Endangered Species Act allows for courts to award reasonable attorneys' fees to parties that substantially prevail on the merits.

Congress has long recognized the importance of encouraging citizens to bring meritorious claims under the Endangered Species Act that they would otherwise abandon due to the financial costs of hiring competent counsel. Many other federal statutes contain similar enforcement mechanisms that encourage citizens to act as a private attorney general.

The Supreme Court has likewise observed in numerous contexts that if private citizens are to enforce laws against "those who violate the Nation's fundamental laws are not to proceed with impunity, then citizens must have the opportunity to recover what it costs them to vindicate these rights in court."

Contrary to the stated goal of H.R. 4315 to "standardize the awarding of attorneys' fees to prevailing parties against the federal government," this legislation is a thinly-disguised effort to prohibit litigation by citizens and public-interest groups.

By eliminating the possibility of reasonable attorneys' fees, this bill creates yet another hurdle that will make it more difficult to find competent legal representation to enforce complex environmental laws.

Reasonable attorneys' fees are particularly appropriate for complex and highly specialized adjudications involving environmental law. Environmental groups are almost uniformly non-profit organizations. Many file lawsuits for injunctive relief to enforce laws and protect the public health. But as a result of this bill, many of these organizations will be deterred from bringing such actions if they cannot recover attorneys' fees.

For these reasons, a broad coalition of interest groups—including Alliance for Justice, Public Citizen, American Association for Justice, Sierra Club, and dozens of other environmental, civil rights, and civil liberties organizations—oppose H.R. 4315.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this misguided legislation.

TRIBUTE TO DETECTIVE KEVIN BURNHAM OF THE SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2014

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, on July 25, the Springfield, Massachusetts, Police Department said farewell to their longest serving officer when Kevin Burnham retired after 43 years and 2 months on the job. A highly respected professional, a popular colleague, and a dear friend to everyone on the force, Kevin relinquished his senior officer badge last week to Ruben Boerro following a time-honored tradition. For the first time since July of 1971, Detective Burnham would not be patrolling the streets of the city he loves.

Ask anyone in the department who their favorite co-worker was, and the reply would likely be Kevin Burnham. They admired his dedication, strength and courage. They enjoyed his sense of humor and the laughter that seemed to follow him everywhere. And his loyalty was unquestioned. At the end of the day, Kevin looked upon the Springfield Police Department as a band of brothers and sisters. To him, the force was a family working together to make our city a better place to live, work and raise our children.

From his early days as a rookie, it was obvious that Kevin was born to be a cop. He had the streets smarts necessary to be effective in law enforcement, but he also had compassion. Those two qualities were the reasons his career was so successful. Whether it was becoming one of the first detectives to work on the narcotics bureau, his service in both the uniform division and the crime prevention bureau, or the responsibility that came with the job of evidence officer, Kevin performed each task exceptionally. He was honest and trustworthy, and his fellow officers knew he had their back.

Being a police officer always comes with risks. And two years ago, one of his closest friends, Officer Kevin Ambrose, was killed in the line of duty. To Kevin Burnham, it was the lowest of low points. But with his trademark integrity and character, he led the funeral procession for his fallen friend along with nearly one thousand law enforcement officials from across the country. He helped turn a sad day into a touching tribute to a lost comrade. That's the kind of person he is.

Kevin and Barbara Burnham have been great friends of mine for many years. They are good people and great fun. As Kevin begins his long overdue retirement, I want to wish him nothing but the very best. And on behalf of the United States of America, it gives me personal satisfaction to congratulate him on an extraordinary career serving and protecting the citizens of Springfield. Well done Detective Burnham.